

what we are to believe concerning God but also what duty God requires of us: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy might." This, as you will remember, is the passage cited by our Lord as the first and great commandment of the Law. And it is a commandment which is "peculiar to revealed religion. (That is only to say, in other words, that it presupposes redemption.) We could not imagine such a precept in the religion of Greece or of Rome, and, of course, we do not find it there. The gods of Greece and Rome were largely apotheoses of human prowess or human vice, and it was impossible for any one to love them in any conceivable sense of the word. Could you have asked one of the ancient Romans, "Do you love Jupiter"? he would have answered, "I fear Jupiter, but I can not love an unprincipled omnipotence of selfishness and lust." And so of all the deities of their pantheon. "Neither the place they hold in the universe, nor their characters and relations to each other, nor their attitude to men, inspire any such emotion. It is altogether different with the God of Israel. Of him Moses says, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.

It is often said that love can not be commanded, but that has only a limited truth. Granted certain relations between persons, and love is demanded by the very nature of the case; if it is wanting, its absence is the gravest of moral faults, and brings innumerable others in its train; till it comes, literally, nothing can be right.

Thus closely related then are Theology and Religion: God revealed to us as one and supreme, holy and loving—that is Theology; our love responding to God's—the total self-surrender of man's being to his Maker—that is Religion.

A Pedagogy.

But a third point remains. By what means can these two indispensable things, Theology and Religion, be preserved from generation to generation? How can we secure the preservation among men of this true knowledge of God and this genuine devotion to his service? It is his answer to this question which I say puts the cap-stone on the proof of Moses' greatness; for he teaches that the only effective method of conserving and perpetuating true knowledge of God and loving obedience to his will is the training of the children in religion, that the responsibility for this training rests chiefly on the parent, and that the home is the mainstay of religion. Hear him: "These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."

The whole matter and form of this injunction assume that religion is the paramount concern of human life. Observe: "These words shall be in thine heart"—not merely memorized but understood and loved—only he can effectually teach God's commands to others who himself obeys them from the heart—"Children like teachers who talk out of their hearts." "And thou shalt teach them dili-

gently"—the Hebrew says sharpened them—unto thy children—make the truth pointed—cause it to penetrate into their minds. "And thou shalt talk of them" at home and by the way, in the evening and in the morning. "With all the familiar ease of conversation"; no anxiety need ever be felt as to the future of children who come from homes where the word of God is talked of naturally, easily, affectionately. "And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes." The Jews, as all know, have interpreted this injunction literally and have based upon it the custom of wearing phylacteries at prayers. A piece of parchment containing this passage (Deut. 6: 4-9) and three other passages in which the same command is given (Ex. xiii. 1-10, 11-16, and Deut. 11: 13-21), is sewed up in a small cubical leather box, with thongs attached, by means of which this box is bound upon the arm or the forehead. But the language is figurative, and the real meaning of the command is that, as the hands are the instruments of action and the eyes the organs of direction and the forehead the chamber of thought and purpose, God's law should direct all our work and hallow all our thoughts—every part of the life should be ruled by it—it should be as constantly present to view as if bound upon the person. "And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house and upon thy gates." This also the Jews have interpreted literally—hence the Mezuzah, that is the square piece of parchment inscribed with Deut. 6: 4-9 and 9: 13-21, which, rolled up and enclosed in a small cylinder of wood or metal, is nailed to the right hand post of every door in a Jewish house. On the outside of the parchment the word Shaddai (Almighty) is written, and a portion of the cylinder is cut out so that this word may be plainly seen. The pious Jew when passing in or out touches the divine name, kisses his finger, and says in Hebrew Psalm 121: 8, "The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth and even forevermore." But here too the language is figurative and the real meaning is that God's law is to rule the whole house—that it is to be kept in view in all goings forth to toil and in all returnings for rest.

God's Ideal of Home Training in Religion.

I have ventured to give this unusual mass of exegetical details in order to show not only how every word of this Mosaic scheme of pedagogy emphasizes the transcendent importance of religion, but also how every detail of this divinely appointed system of home training accentuates the responsibility of parents. The word of God is to be in the heart, it is to be taught diligently to the children, it is to be harpooned into their minds, it is to be the subject of talk as a part of our life, we are to speak of it as naturally as we breathe or eat; it is to dominate the whole man—head, eyes, hands, to regulate the whole life—thoughts, purposes, actions, it is to rule the whole house—to hallow the home in all its phases of activity or rest, all its goings out and comings in. That is God's ideal of home training in religion. If it is ever to be realized it must be realized through the faithfulness of parents.

Hereditary and Environment.

The character of a child is chiefly the products of two forces, heredity and environment, and to both of these forces pa-

rents are more vitally related than any other human beings. Over the first they have comparatively little control—the child himself has none whatever. As Dr. Stalker says, "There is in human life a mysterious element of necessity. Every one is born into a particular family which has a history and a character of its own, formed before he arrives. He has no choice in the matter; yet this affects all his subsequent life. He may be born where it is an honor to be born or on the contrary where it is a disgrace. He may be heir to inspiring memories and refined habits or he may have to take up an hereditary burden of physical or moral disease. A man has no choice of his mother or father, his brothers or sisters, his uncles or his cousins, yet on these ties which he has no power to unlock may depend three-fourths of his happiness." With what a solemn sense of responsibility then should a man and a woman enter into that relation from which a new life is to spring! How fervently they should pray that they may inject no physical or moral poison into the stream of their child's descent, but on the contrary add something to his splendid inheritance of health and virtue! And how earnestly they should strive to foster the good and repress the evil which belong by birth to the child in whose veins their own blood flows! God declares in Malachi that his purpose in instituting family relationship was "that he might seek a Godly seed"—the object of the marriage relation is to bring children into the world and to give them a godly rearing. How infinitely removed from the divine idea are the flippant conception of marriage and the baneful evasion of parental responsibility which have become so common in our own day! Little wonder that our Lord made this institution the one exception to his rule of announcing only general principles concerning human relationships—little wonder that he legislated specifically and directly in regard to marriage only. Little wonder that the Bible makes the family rather than individual the unit of the church. There is a heritage of piety: "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience" says Paul. Grace does not run in the blood, indeed, yet a godly ancestry lays the lines of thought and feeling and tendency along which Christian character is built up. And God has promised that, if parents are faithful and will in their training take due account of what each child is by heredity, that training will keep them in the right path (Prov. 22:6.) Train up a child according to his way—with due regard to his connatal temperament and talents—and when he is old he will not depart from it.

The Atmosphere of the Home.

While parents have little control over heredity they have immense control over environment, the other main force in the making of our children; and when it is asked how parents can meet the tremendous responsibility resting upon them—how they can effectually teach the character-making and soul-saving Word of God to their children, as Moses here enjoins, the answer is, first, by the creation of a right environment, a religious atmosphere in the home. Modern conditions have made this far more difficult to do than it used to be. When apartment houses are taking the place of homes, when the feverish rush of business prevents anything